

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-02 EB-08 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2946

UNCLAS MUSCAT 0261

FOR NEA/ARP - GERLACH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, MU, US

SUBJECT: TOW MISSILES

REF: (A) 76 MUSCAT 1573; (B) MUSCAT 0161

1. SAF HEADQUARTERS OFFICER BRIEFED US FEB 15 ON MINISTRY OF DEFENSE PLANNING FOR TOW MISSILES. THIS WAS AT OUR REQUEST, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND FOR MINISTRY'S RECENT ORDER OF 136 MISSILES (REFTEL B). FOLLOWING IS SUBSTANCE OF BRIEFING.

2. BRIEFER BEGAN BY CORRECTING DELIVERY DATE. MINISTRY DOES NOT RPT NOT SEEK DELIVERY IN JUNE 1978 AS ORDER STATED. DELIVERY IS REQUESTED FOR JUNE 1980. THIS IS RETURN TO PROJECTION THEY HAD MADE FEW MONTHS AGO (REFTEL A) AND REPRESENTS ASSESSMENT OF SAF OPERATIONS OFFICERS OF FUTURE NEEDS. HOWEVER, ORDER IS MEANT TO BE PLACED NOW AND SHOULD BE HANDLED AS FIRM REQUEST.

3. WITH THIS AS BASIS, BRIEFER STATED INTENTION IS REPLACEMENT NOT RPT NOT AUGMENTATION. SAF WISHES TO KEEP TOW MISSILES IN OPERATION AT LEAST UNTIL 1985, WITH A MINIMUM OF 100 ROUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT PREIOD. BRIEFER GAVE FOLLOWING DATA:
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(A) SAF IS EXPENDING A TRAINING AND DEMONSTRATION MINIMUM OF 25 ROUNDS THIS YEAR AND WILL CONTINUE AT THIS RATE THROUGH NEXT FIVE YEARS. THEREAFTER, MINIMUM MAY GO DOWN TO AROUND 12 PER YEAR. (STOCK ON HAND AS OF JUNE 1976 WAS 177 MISSILES.)

(B) DESPITE OUR RECENT ASSURANCES -SAF DOES NOT FEEL IT CAN

HOLD TO ESTIMATE OF NINE-YEAR SHELF LIFE. EXTREME TEMPERATURES IN OMAN, HIGH HUMIDITY, AND OTHER ROUGH CONDITIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT, THEY BELIEVE, TO MAINTAIN MISSILES IN CONDITIONS ON WHICH PRESEMAPLY NINE-YEAR ESTIMATE WAS FOUNDED. SAF HOLDS TO SEVEN-YEAR ESTIMATE INSTEAD. THEY ALSO PREFER TO ADHERE TO ESTIMATE OF ONE-YEAR UNBOXED LIFE, ON BASIS THAT OMAN'S CLIMATIC EXTREMES WORK WITH EVEN GREATER SEVERITY ONCE MISSILE IS UNBOXED.⁷⁹

4. WORKING ON ABOVE CALCULATIONS, SAF BELIEVES SIMPLEST METHOD MEETING REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS IS THROUGH A SINGLE DELIVERY OF 136 MISSILES IN MID-1980. ABOUT TWO YEARS AFTER THAT, THE CURRENT STOCK OF MISSILES WILL BE EITHER EXPENDED OR CONSIDERED PAST USEFUL LIFE. AN EXPENDITURE OF 12 MISSILES PER YEAR OUT OF THE REQUESTED NEW STOCK STARTING IN MID-1982 WOULD LEAVE 100 ROUNDS IN MID-1985.
WOLLE

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